

Spark Gap

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*The Official
Newsletter of the
Mid-State Amateur
Radio Club*

MARC

Mid-State Amateur
Radio Club
P.O. Box 836
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www.midstatehams.org

07-81, the Commission will cut the fee from its current \$20.80 to \$11.70. This marks the lowest fee in the history of the current vanity call sign program. The FCC is authorized by the Communications Act of 1934 (as amended) to collect vanity call sign fees to recover the costs associated with that program. The vanity call sign fee has fluctuated over the 11 years of the current program — from a low of \$12 to a high of \$50. The FCC says it anticipates some 14,700 Amateur Radio vanity call sign “payment units” or applications during the next fiscal year, collecting \$171,990 in fees from the program.

Vanity Fee Due for New, Renewal Applications

The vanity call sign regulatory fee is payable not only when applying for a new vanity call sign, but also upon renewing a vanity call sign for a new term. The first vanity call sign licenses issued under the current Amateur Radio vanity call sign program that began in 1996 came up for renewal last year.

Those holding vanity call signs issued prior to

FCC to Lower Vanity Call Sign Fees September 17

The FCC will reduce the regulatory fee to obtain or renew an Amateur Radio vanity call sign by more than 40 percent starting September 17. In a *Report & Order (R&O)* released August 6, “Assessment and Collection of Regulatory Fees for Fiscal Year 2007,” in MD Docket

1996 are exempt from having to pay the vanity call sign regulatory fee at renewal, however. That’s because Congress did not authorize the FCC to collect regulatory fees until 1993. Such “heritage” vanity call sign holders do not appear as vanity licensees in the FCC Amateur Radio database.

Amateur Radio licensees may file for renewal only within 90 days of their license expiration date. All radio amateurs must have an FCC Registration Number (FRN) before filing any application with the Commission.

Applicants can obtain an FRN by going to the [ULS](#) and clicking on the “New Users Register” link. You must supply your Social Security Number to obtain an FRN.

Time to Change?

ARRL Processes License Renewals, Including Vanities

The ARRL VEC will process license renewals for vanity call sign holders for a modest fee. The service is available to ARRL members and nonmembers, although League members pay less. Routine, non-vanity renewals continue to be free for ARRL members. Trustees of club stations with vanity call signs may renew either via the ULS or through a Club Station Call Sign Administrator, such as ARRL VEC.

ARES Nets Active as Hurricanes Dean, Felix and Humberto Come Ashore and Flooding Hits Michigan, Minnesota and Ohio



ARRL: August/September

2007: August in Indiana was hot, humid and fairly boring as far as the weather was concerned.

However, hams across the country and around the Gulf of Mexico were kept busy as the hurricane season got going. The hurricanes continue to come as we get into the first half of September. As hurricanes were dumping rain, wind and surge, several inland states saw heavy rains almost equal to the great flood of 1913.

Below is just a sampling of the ARES events and nets activated in the past 30 days.

Hurricane Dean

The VoIP Hurricane Net activated Friday morning, August 17, at 2 AM EDT/0600 UTC in response to Hurricane Dean's impact on St Lucia, Dominica, Martinique and other surrounding Caribbean islands. Reports of damage along with wind estimates and measurements were relayed to [WX4NHC](#), the National Hurricane Center in Miami, Florida.

Julio Ripoll, WD4R, Assistant WX4NHC Coordinator, manning the Amateur Radio station at the National Hurricane Center in Miami, Florida reported that the Meteorological Office in Martinique had a measured wind gust of 88 MPH before Hurricane Center forecasters lost the phone connection to the Martinique weather office. "We need any stations that have relays into Martinique by HF or any other means to get in touch with someone there and relay reports of meteorological data and damage.

After hitting these islands Hurricane Dean moved on to Jamaica and the Yucatan Peninsula before dissipating over land.

Northwest Ohio Flooding

Seneca County Ohio EOC activated as heavy rains over the past week began taking their toll on Northwest Ohio communities, as near record flood levels peaked on Wednesday. Ohio Amateur Radio Emergency Service

District 1 was especially hard-hit in the Hancock and Seneca County areas, and a command post at the Seneca County Emergency Operations Center was activated.

The Hancock County hams even had to be resourceful for their own services. A few days before the major flooding began, lightning struck the Findlay Radio Club repeater site during another severe storm. Radio communication during the flood was conducted on a simplex frequency, with additional support through their 440 MHz repeater.

Michigan Storms and Tornado

On Friday, August 24 at 5:15 PM (EDT), the National Weather Service issued a severe thunderstorm warning for Genesee County. This storm produced two tornados in the mid-Michigan area that caused severe damage to several towns. The greatest damage occurred in the City of Fenton located just south of Flint. The NWS confirmed that an EF2 tornado had touched down and had torn a path 26 miles long and up to 0.5 miles wide through Livingston, Oakland, Genesee and Lapeer County, damaging at least 250 homes and businesses. An EF2 tornado, using the enhanced Fujita scale, is a wind estimate of 110-135 MPH in a three-second gust. More than 12,000 people lost power due to the storms.

Michigan's Genesee County ARES and SKYWARN were activated due to a severe thunderstorm watch. The storm moved into the county with such heavy rain that visibility dropped down to zero at several points. Funnel clouds were seen in the western part of the county, but these could not be confirmed. The NWS issued a Tornado Warning based on confirmed sightings in the adjacent counties to the west, as well as reports from their Doppler radar.

Minnesota Flooding

Record rainfall and resultant flooding and mudslides in southeastern Minnesota over the

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N9SIU

ARES Nets

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past week disrupted communications and prompted emergency response officials to call upon Amateur Radio Emergency Services (ARES) groups for communications assistance.

Olmsted County ARES was among the first to respond. Their members were rapidly deployed throughout the disaster area. As conditions deteriorated, the call for additional ARES assistance was made, and Scott County ARES was notified shortly after noon on Sunday, August 26. They were able to send three members to the disaster area to assist local emergency responders with communications.

The river flowing through Rushford had jumped its banks and effectively split the town in two, with the EOC on one side and the shelter on the opposite bank of the flooded river. The staff at the EOC received anxious inquiries about family and friends and used the Amateur Radio link with the shelters to provide information to calm worried relatives.

Hurricane Felix

Hurricane Felix made landfall as a Category 5 hurricane causing significant damage in northeastern Nicaragua and heavy rainfall into southeastern Honduras. The threat from Felix will be moving from significant wind damage to major flooding over the course of the day Tuesday. The VoIP Hurricane Net has been active since 0800 UTC Tuesday to gather reports for WX4NHC, the Amateur Radio station at the National Hurricane Center. According to the NHC, Felix is now a Category 2 storm and is expected to be downgraded even further soon.

WX4NHC has been monitoring the Net and other systems to gather reports and information. Felix is expected to weaken and should be below hurricane strength by Tuesday night. As Felix weakens, heavy rain will fall over Nicaragua, Honduras, El Salvador, Guatemala and Belize, posing a potential flash flood and landslide threat to the region. Tropical Storm Warnings are now in effect over much of the area.

Hurricane Humberto

Hurricane Humberto, a Category 1 hurricane and the first hurricane to make landfall in the US in two years, came ashore in Texas on Thursday, September 13 not even 50 miles from where Hurricane Rita hit in 2005. Stronger than initially expected, Humberto continued eastward toward Louisiana and Mississippi, where flood warnings were in effect.

Humberto didn't even exist until Wednesday, only becoming a tropical storm that afternoon, strengthening from a tropical depression with 35 MPH winds, to a hurricane with 85 MPH winds in just 18 hours. Only three other storms have pulled off a similar feat, growing from depression to hurricane in 18 hours — Blanche in 1969, Harvey in 1981 and Alberto in 1982 — but all of them were out at sea at the time, not about to crash ashore like Humberto. ■

Greenwood High School Marching Band Invitational

MARC will again be assisting with this spectacular event by providing emergency communications and assisting with parking.

The event will be held on Saturday, September 22, 2007.

Those who wish to volunteer may do so by contacting Bob LaGrange, N9SIU. His e-mail address is N9SIU@yahoo.com.

This is your opportunity to provide a service to the community. Linda Harshbarger, KC9GCH, has three extra orange vests for those of you who did not purchase an ARRL Emergency Communication vest but needs to be visible. Linda will have these at the August meeting. After the event these should be returned to the club station room so that they may be used at future events. ■

**WA9RDF
Repeater
146.835/
146.235 MHz
151.4 Hz PL
Tone**

**Weekly Net
Every Sunday
at 7PM EST**

**Tune in to hear
the ARRL
Newsline!**

The Mid-State Amateur Radio Club sponsors a weekly traffic and social net on our repeater. The net begins at 7:00 p.m. local time, and features local news, announcements, and NTS traffic, as well as rebroadcasts of Amateur Radio Newsline.

Weekly Net

Make sure to check out our weekly net, held every Sunday at 1900 (7 PM) local time. This is a great chance to meet other local amateur radio operators and test your operating skills. Newsline is often played, allowing net participants to get the latest news about the amateur radio hobby. For those without the license or means to check in over the air, we offer an email check-in. Just send an email with your name and contact information to

netcontrol@midstatehams.org, and we will record your check-in!



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2007 Schedule of Events

Public Service Events and/or Educational/Testing Opportunities

SEPTEMBER 2007

15 MARC Meeting - 8 AM

VEC Testing immediately following the meeting (approx. 9:30 am)

Johnson County Emergency Management Agency, 1111 Hospital Road, Franklin, IN

22 Greenwood High School Marching Band Invitational

To volunteer or for more information contact Bob LaGrange, N9SIU

OCTOBER 2007

7 46th Annual Hoosier Hills Hamfest 2007

Lawrence County 4H Fairgrounds, Bedford, IN

20 MARC Meeting - 8 AM

VEC Testing immediately following the meeting (approx. 9:30 am)

Johnson County Emergency Management Agency, 1111 Hospital Road, Franklin, IN

21 Indianapolis Marathon

To volunteer or for more information contact Mike Palmer N9FEB at www.indyhams.com

31 Halloween Goblin Watch

Details at October MARC meeting. To volunteer contact one of the officers of the club.

NOVEMBER 2007

17 MARC Meeting - 8 AM

VEC Testing immediately following the meeting (approx. 9:30 am)

Johnson County Emergency Management Agency, 1111 Hospital Road, Franklin, IN

17-18 Ft. Wayne Hamfest & Computer Expo

Sponsored by the Allen County Amateur Radio Technical Society; Event held at the Allen County War Memorial Coliseum and Exposition Center, Fort Wayne, IN

24 Evansville Hamfest

Vanderburgh Co. 4-H Fairgrounds, Evansville, IN

Mid-State Amateur Radio Club

The Mid-State Amateur Radio Club meets the THIRD SATURDAY of each month in the basement of the Johnson County Emergency Management Agency, 1111 Hospital Road, Franklin, Indiana 46131.

See our website, www.midstatehams.org, for maps on how to get to our meeting.